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TO : The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM : I.M.R. - Roger Hilsman

SUBJECT: Intelligence Note: Implications of Delivery of Soviet MIG Aircraft to Cuba

Shipment of Soviet Jets Arrives in Cuba. Reliable intelligence reports indicate that Cuba has recently received a shipment of 23 crates containing MIG jet aircraft, perhaps including some MIG-19's, from the Soviet Union; that this shipment was probably preceded by an earlier delivery of a number of MIG-15's or 17's; and that some 60 Cubans have either returned or will soon return from military training, presumably flight training, in Czechoslovakia.

Cuba Will Have Greatly Increased Air Capability. The Cuban Air Force, which has relied principally on several US T-33 subsonic jet trainers, a few Sea Fury propeller-driven fighters, a small number of B-26's, and a few poorly trained, politically unreliable pilots, must, when the new jets become operational, be considered to have a substantially improved air strength. Additional plane deliveries (which are likely), the return of more flight trainees from the Bloc, the presence of Bloc instructors in Cuba, and further training within the country will serve to increase this capability.

Fear of Cuban Aggressive Moves in Caribbean Will Increase. The possibilities are increased that Castro will feel himself in a better position to take advantage of underlying tensions in the Caribbean, heightened since the assassination of Dominican dictator Trujillo. Use of the jets to support Cuban-sponsored invasions or pro-Castro uprisings in these countries, although still highly unlikely because of probable US or OAS reaction, cannot be discounted. The countries of the area will almost surely feel themselves threatened by Cuba's possession of MIG's and may well react with an avalanche of requests for modern US jets.

Invasion of Cuba Without Heavy Air Support Impossible. The acquisition of MIG aircraft and the return of Bloc-trained pilots makes any invasion of Cuba a virtual impossibility without strong air support from modern jet fighters flown by well-trained pilots. It will no longer be possible for a small number of obsolescent aircraft to provide adequate air cover for an invasion force.

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Soviets Apparently

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Soviets Apparently Discount Possibility of US Intervention. The MIG deliveries apparently indicate that the Soviet Union does not believe the presence of such aircraft in Cuba will be viewed by the United States as sufficient provocation to warrant direct US intervention.

Implications for US Policy. The possession of jet aircraft by the Castro regime does not appear to introduce any new factors requiring a major reorientation of US policy. It may, however, provide grounds for the imposition of further restrictive measures against Cuba, such as application of the Trading with the Enemy Act. It may also serve to make Latin American governments more aware of the dangers of Cuban ties with the Bloc, and to arouse greater hemisphere support for US policies toward Cuba.

"Declassified for Publication in
Foreign Relations of the United States"

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

7/5/61

Mr. Helaman

Roger,

On Friday June 30,
Lt. Gen. Robert Wood told
me that his command
(U.S. Army Air Defense Command)
had recommended a 4 phase
program to the Joint Chiefs
with the objective of pre-
venting any irrational
sorties of the MIG-5 over
the Miami area. The Chiefs
approved the first two of the
4 phases of the recommended
program, i.e., the deployment
of interceptors and radar in
the area. Joe

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